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BASIC ELEMENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 3

MORE IMPORTANT WORDS TO KNOW

Important words to know:

1. mad – crazy
A mad scientist lives in that run-down house.
2. marrow – the basic part of an idea; the tissue inside bones
Let's get to the marrow of the plan.
3. muffle – to quiet, soften, or mute
The cloth over his mouth muffled his voice.
4. plank – a piece of lumber cut thicker than a board
The pirate walked the plank.
5. premises – land and the buildings on it
These premises are used by our football team.
6. repose – to rest or relax
Repose by the swimming pool.
7. shriek – a shrill, frantic scream or cry
The shriek of the whistle scared me.
8. trifle – something of little importance or value
He doesn't let such trifles worry him.
9. vex – to upset or annoy
Spiders vex me.
10. wane – to come to the end
Summer is waning.



The Game: Choose the best word to complete each sentence.

- muffled planks mad marrow premises
1. The hotel and its _____ are said to be haunted.
 2. The hotel clerk seemed odd, but not _____ or scary.
 3. I woke to the sound of a _____ scream.
 4. I was frightened to the _____!
 5. But the sounds were only creaks of the floor _____.

- wanes vex trifles repose shrieks
1. I plan to relax on the beach until the evening _____.
 2. The gulls' _____ are loud.
 3. However, the gulls do not _____ me.
 4. When I relax, my worries are only _____.
 5. I will enjoy this _____ with my friends.



Write a sentence with "premises."

STORY TWO

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe (adapted)

Nervous—very, dreadfully nervous I had been and am. But why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed or dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Observe how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (#1)



The idea haunted me day and night. There was no reason for it. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold. Gradually I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever. (#2)

You fancy me mad, but madmen know nothing. You should have seen me. I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, I thrust in my head. I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb his sleep. Would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, I undid the lantern cautiously—just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights. I found the eye always closed. It was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. (#3)

Every morning, I went boldly into the chamber and spoke to him, inquiring how he passed the night. So you see he would have been a very smart old man, indeed, to suspect my doings. (#4)

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I kept pushing it open steadily, steadily. (#5)

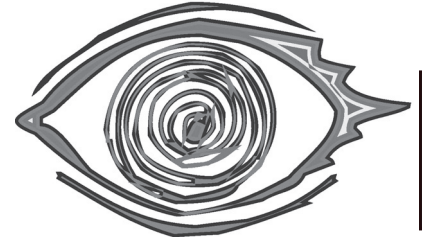
I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening. The old man sprang up in bed, crying out, "Who's there?" (#6)

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening. (#7)

The Game: Underline the sentence that describes the old man's eye.

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

There are layers of meaning in stories. The first layer is the basic story. In "The Tell-Tale Heart": Man kills old man, hides body, hears heartbeat, confesses to police.



Poe uses symbolism to add layers of meaning.

Symbolism is a person, thing, or idea having a meaning other than its basic meaning. The different meaning is usually deeper and more important. The eye and the heart are two main symbols.

The conflict is in the mind of the storyteller, the unnamed narrator. The most important layer of the story is what is going on in the narrator's twisted mind.

The Game: Answer the questions about the story.

1. How does the narrator feel at the beginning of the story?
 angry nervous hungry
2. What sense is acute in the beginning of the story?
 smell sight hearing
3. Why did the narrator kill the old man?
 for his gold for revenge because of the eye
4. The narrator tries to convince himself and the reader that he is NOT what?
 mad stupid evil
5. How did the narrator kill the old man?
 smothered with a pillow
 choked with his hands
 pulled the bed on him
6. In "The Tell-Tale Heart," the eye is a symbol of the way the narrator sees the world. How do you think the narrator sees the world?

7. A heart is a symbol of emotions. Guilt is a strong emotion in the story. Does the guilt seem to get stronger? _____. How do you know?

THE BEST WORD

To create the feeling of a story, choose the best word.

Always read every answer.

Ex: You fancy me _____, but madmen know nothing.

angry nuts mad calm



Think, which is the best word? Write YES, NO, or MAYBE.

You fancy me angry, but madmen know nothing. _____.

You fancy me nuts, but madmen know nothing. _____.

You fancy me mad, but madmen know nothing. _____.

You fancy me calm, but madmen know nothing. _____.

Write the best word in the sentence.

You fancy me _____, but madmen know nothing.

The Game: Fill in each blank with the best word or phrase.

1. To chill to the marrow is to make someone feel very _____.
fearless bold daring frightened

2. To muffle is to _____.
quiet grin quick quit

3. A plank is a _____.
brand bust clod board

4. To search someone's premises is to look around their _____.
property office planet store

5. To repose is to _____.
gossip forget ignore rest

6. To shriek is to _____.
scream scam skip shout

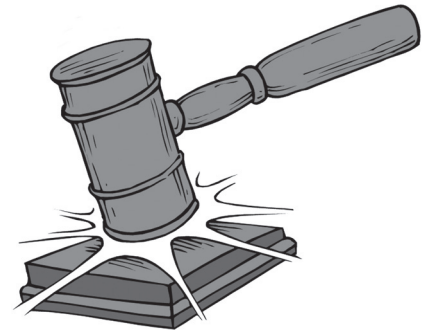
7. A trifle is not _____.
good crazy important angry

8. To vex is to _____.
end grip ignore upset

BRAINSTORM

A fun and important step in writing is brainstorming. Brainstorming is writing down ideas as they come to mind. Write anything that is about the topic.

FYI: A legal test of insanity → Does the person know the difference between right and wrong?



The Game: In the story, the narrator says he is not mad. Do you think he is mad? _____. Jot a list of reasons for your opinion.

The Game: Think about proving to a judge that the murderer is or is not insane. Use your list of reasons to write a paragraph.

ELEMENTS OF
BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 3